

Idaho governor visits INL, biomass researchers

Photo: Grossenbacher and Otter

Idaho Gov. Butch Otter and John Grossenbacher, INL lab director, begin a tour of the INL Research Center on Thursday.

Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter visited INL April 5 to learn more about current capabilities, future plans and the bioenergy research performance.

Flying in from Boise, Otter visited the Idaho Research Center for a meeting with INL Lab Director John Grossenbacher and a tour of IRC. He was accompanied by Woodley Preucil and J.D. Denney, two representatives of 13D, an Idaho-based investment research firm interested in bioenergy technologies.

David Hill, deputy director for Science and Technology, briefed Otter on INL research efforts for clean, smart and secure energy technologies to be used in Idaho and the Rocky Mountain region. Hill emphasized that many INL research contributions have focused on transforming Idaho agriculture and forestry by leveraging biomass for energy production. The discussion also addressed INL contributions to other clean technologies, including wind power, hydropower and geothermal.

Public-private partnerships for developing the world-class energy resources also were discussed, especially those needed in the energy-rich Rocky Mountain region. INL has key relationships with governments and other enterprises in Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and most recently, Alberta, Canada.

After the briefing, Otter toured the IRC Visualization Laboratory to learn about the use of new virtual tools to improve agricultural machinery designs. Richard Hess, lead researcher for INL's bioenergy program, outlined the roadmap that INL researchers developed to guide efforts in harvest and collection, storage, preprocessing, and transportation to biorefineries. He also detailed progress made in pursuing these agriculture models, including the recent announcement that the international company Iogen would be locating a bioenergy facility in Shelley, Idaho.

Photo: Otter at briefing

Gov. Otter attends a briefing on bioenergy.

Dave Muth, an Iowa State University intern working at INL, described how the laboratory's new visualization laboratory has been used to virtually design improvements to agricultural combines that will provide feedstock to biorefineries. Then, Hess and Muth accompanied Otter to the IRC plaza to inspect the modified combine, parked adjacent to IRC. The visit ended with a photo opportunity for the bioenergy research team and INL senior management.

[View](#) the video. (2.3MB WMV)

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General Contact:

Keith Arterburn, (208) 526-4845,

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